

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 7290

FROM VATICAN OFFICE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV,IT,CZ
SUBJECT: RESUMPTIONOF VATICAN/CZECHOSLOVAKIAN TALKS

REF: ROME 3839

1. VATICAN OFFICIAL HAS INFORMED US THAT VATICAN DELEGATION IS PLANNING TO DEPART APRIL 20 FOR PRAGUE TO RESUME PERIODIC CONSULTATIONS ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS. DELEGATION, WHICH WILL BE HEADED BY NUNCIO-AT-LARGE FOR EAST EUROPEAN CONTACTS, LUIGI POGGI, EXPECTS TO SPEND 10 DAYS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND HOLD TALKS WITH GOC AND CATHOLIC CHURCH OFFICIALS.

2. VATICAN OFFICIAL STATED THAT THE WHOLE RANGE OF OUT-STANDING CHURCH/STATE ISSUES WILL BE REVIEWED, INCLUDING ECCLESIASTICAL APPOINTMENTS,SEMINARIES, RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND ECCLESIASTICAL TERRITORIES.

3. GOC, ACCORDING TO VATICAN OFFICIAL, PRESSED FOR VATICAN FOREIGN MINISTER CASAROLI TO HEAD DELEGATION BUT VATICAN FELT THAT GOC WAS NOT YET PREPARED TO MAKE THE KIND OF CONCESSIONS WHICH WOULD JUSTIFY CASAROLI'S PRESENCE AND
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THAT CASAROLI WOULD BE PREPARED TO GO TO PRAGUE ONLY WHEN A "PROTOCOL COULD BE SIGNED RESOLVING SEVERAL OF THE OUTSTANDING ISSUES.

4. VATICAN IS NOT LIKELY TO GIVE MUCH PUBLICITY TO PRESENT TRIP. IT APPROACHES CONSULTATIONS WITH GOC WITHMUCH TREPIDATION BECAUSE MANY IN THE ROMAN CURIA AND THE

CATHOLIC CHURCH AT LARGE ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH THE RESULTS OF VATICAN OSTPOLITIK INSOFAR AS CZECHOSLOVAKIA IS CONCERNED. IN THIS CONNECTION, ITALIAN PRESS THIS WEEK HIGHLIGHTED GOC RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION USING TWO CASES OF ALLEGED GOC MISTREATMENT--ONE CASE RELATES TO BISHOP GABRIS (ROME 3839), WHO UNDERWENT INTERROGATION FOR MAKING STATEMENTS CRITICAL OF THE REGIME DURING THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS IN ROME: THE OTHER RELATED TO THE CASE OF BISHOP JAN KOREC, WHO APPARENTLY HAS BEEN DENIED A PROPER CHURCH OFFICE BECAUSE OF HIS ANTI-GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES IN THE 1950'S. ACCORDING TO A VATICAN EAST EUROPEAN EXPERT, IN BOTH CASES THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE EXAGGERATION OF THE FACTS AND OBVIOUSLY WHOEVER LEAKED THE INFORMATION AT THIS TIME WAS INTERESTED IN HINDERING VATICAN ACTIVITIES FOR REACHING A RAPPROACHMENT WITH THE GOC. GARDNER

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